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AUTHOR Williams, E. Jane, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

A study described and evaluated the Literacy Collaborative, a collaborative effort between individual schools and school districts and the Ohio State University. The overall goal of the Literacy Collaborative is to significantly raise the level of literacy achievement of kindergarten, first, and second grade students by implementing instructional approaches and safety nets for students needing additional support. Four measures were used to evaluate the program. Twelve schools met selection criteria: has been a Literacy Collaborative school at least 4 years; the Literacy Collaborative training model has been followed and implemented; and the literacy coordinator has been at the school since the beginning of his/her training. Trends in increased achievement on a standardized test of reading were noted for 7 of the 12 schools, through the Fall of 1998. Recommendations include: (1) full implementation of the Literacy Collaborative training model appears to be necessary to achieve good results; (2) teachers need to be sure that children are engaged in reading and writing instruction for sufficient amounts of time each day; (3) efforts with schools to improve home-school communication should be continued; and (4) literacy coordinators need administrative support to produce the desired change. (Contains 48 references, and 20 figures and 4 tables of data.) (EF)

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LITERACY COLLABORATIVE®

1999 Research Report

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Literacy Collaborative
1999 Research Report

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Principal Investigator
Gay Su Pinnell

Project Director
Andrea McCarrier

Director of Research and Evaluation Center
E. Jane Williams

Editor
E. Jane Williams

Graphic Designer
Jeanette Montoney

Project Staff
Lisa Brandt
Diane DeFord
Martha Ann Duncan
Mary Fried
Paige Furgerson
Margaret Gwyther
Justina Henry
Carol Lyons
Denise Morgan
Patricia Scharer
Barbara Joan Wiley

Research Staff
James Bach
Yo-An Lee
Ellen Ousley
Regina Rockensies
Patty Tresey

Literacy Collaborative®
at The Ohio State University
200 Ramseyer Hall
29 West Woodruff Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210

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Research Report
1999

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LITERACY COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH REPORT 1999

The Literacy Collaborative is a cooperative effort that involves individual schools, school districts, and university training centers representing a network of schools committed to the long-term research and development that is needed to assure literacy success for all children. The Literacy Collaborative provides long-term professional development and systemic support for teachers who are helping children learn effective literacy skills and use literacy as a tool for learning. The overall goal of the Literacy Collaborative is to significantly raise the level of literacy achievement for children across the elementary years.

Work in the primary grades (kindergarten, first and second grade) has been ongoing since 1993 and involves over 300 schools; work in intermediate grades (third through sixth) is currently in a pilot stage involving ten schools. Educators involved in the Literacy Collaborative create effective, efficient environments for literacy learning in their schools, implement a combination of research-based instructional approaches in classrooms, and provide safety nets for students who require additional support to become independent readers and writers.

The purpose of this report is threefold. In the first two sections, a description of the initiative will be provided and the research/evaluation design for all Literacy Collaborative schools will be discussed. In the third section, results of data collected for schools that have been involved in the Literacy Collaborative for at least four years will be presented and discussed with implications for the implementation and further development of the project.

Section I: Description of the Literacy Collaborative

The Literacy Collaborative incorporates a design for creating systems to guarantee early literacy success for all children. Work in the intermediate grades is designed to help children use literacy effectively across a wide variety of texts and learning contexts. The Literacy Collaborative design is based on principles derived from research on literacy learning and teaching, professional development, and educational change.

Literacy Learning and Teaching Component

Research Base

Literacy Collaborative schools are characterized by instruction that is based on research on teaching and learning. A variety of contexts for language and literacy learning provide challenge for children and allow them to use their strengths as learners. Strong instruction supports learning through direct teaching and also supports independent application of important principles in reading and writing (Bruner, 1983; Clay, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978).

It is important that instruction is tailored to the learner. Instruction on topics already mastered is inefficient; instruction on concepts that are too difficult is ineffective. The role of the teacher, then, is to identify and provide the most appropriate instruction so that each learner can build on strengths and accelerate achievement. It is also important to engage students in a wide range of literacy and language learning activities so that they develop basic skills and learn the power of reading and writing in their lives. Research indicates that consistent classroom instruction in a rich literacy program, with safety nets to provide extra help for some children, results in higher achievement and fewer at-risk children (Rowe, 1995).

Early instruction in Literacy Collaborative classrooms involves students in hearing a variety of children's literature read aloud and engaging in reading and writing experiences that help them learn the purposes of literacy (Booth, 1999; Hundley & Powell, 1999; McCarrier & Pataccа,

1994). There is a strong emphasis on learning to hear the sounds in words (phonemic awareness) as well as learning to look at letters and words and acquire critical concepts about how print works (Clay, 1991; McCarrier & Patacca, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987). The alphabet is the basic tool of the reader and writer; all words in our system are based on this limited set of graphic signs. To identify letters, a basic foundational skill, the child must learn to notice the features (with very small differences) that distinguish one letter from another (Lyons, 1999).

In Literacy Collaborative classrooms, children learn letter-sound relationships in several different ways including structured mini-lessons, interactive word walls and charts, and "hands on" work in an ABC or word study center (Chall, 1989; Henry, 1999). And, they are taught to apply that knowledge in reading and writing through guided reading, interactive writing, and writing workshop. Early emphasis is also placed on acquiring knowledge of a core of known high frequency words while at the same time learning important principles about letter-sound relationships and how words "work." (Adams, 1990; Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Bryant, MacLean, Bradley, & Crossland, 1990; Ceprano, 1980; Ehri, 1991).

Reading instruction in Literacy Collaborative classrooms assures that students comprehend written text (Pearson & Fielding, 1991) as well as learn to use phonics skills while reading for meaning (Pressley, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Instruction in writing assures that students learn to spell conventionally while writing to communicate (Henderson, 1990). Writing, in fact, contributes substantially to children learning to read words (Ehri & Wilce, 1985). In each classroom, a systematic word study system is established to help students from kindergarten through sixth grade examine phonics and spelling principles. Within the context of writing and reading continuous text, children are guided to apply these principles as they read for meaning and write to communicate (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998).

Flexible Grouping

Teachers work with both heterogeneous and homogeneous groups of students depending on instructional purpose. When appropriate, teachers work with the entire class, for example, while reading aloud or introducing a writing lesson before writer's workshop. At other times, they meet with small groups of children or individual students providing instruction tailored to the needs of individual students.

A Literacy Framework

An organized framework guides the combination of specific instructional approaches. In primary grades, students are involved in a range of literacy activities, including:

- Hearing written language read aloud on a daily basis to develop knowledge of book language and expand vocabulary.
- Engaging in shared reading of enlarged texts to develop knowledge of early reading behaviors, high frequency words, and letter-sound relationships.
- Reading teacher-selected, leveled text in guided reading, small group instruction to develop effective reading strategies and practice on texts that are at appropriate levels of difficulty.
- Participating in systematic study of letters, sounds, and words as a part of each day's work.
- Engaging in shared and interactive writing for the demonstration of skills related to composing and learning about word construction.
- Writing independently with demonstration and guidance from the teacher.

In intermediate grades, the framework expands to emphasize content area reading and writing, sustained investigations or research projects, and reading and writing a greater range of text genre including nonfiction, narratives, and poetry. Daily involvement in reading and writing continuous text is intensive as the framework is used within a *required* 2 1/2- to 3-hour language arts block of time.

Safety Nets

Comprehensive school reform must provide for the lowest achievers, those children who are at-risk because they find reading and writing difficult to learn. We must teach all children. Some children, for a variety of reasons, require more teaching than others; early intervention is essential. And, it is essential for the intervention to catch students before they fail and before they fall so far behind their peers that they cannot profit from classroom instruction (Allington, 1991; Torgeson, Wagner, & Rashotte, 1997a, 1997b). It makes sense to design our interventions in a way that is consistent with what we know from research about "what works" for young, at-risk children. Well designed and delivered interventions that are consistent with the findings of research are worth the investment of resources.

Reading Recovery® is a research based program that is designed to assure that initially struggling children build effective reading and writing processes (Askew, Fountas, Lyons, Pinnell, & Schmitt, 1999; Pinnell, 1997). We teach those children who have been identified as the lowest achievers in their classes and we work with them intensively until they become independent readers and writers. A required safety net for all Literacy Collaborative schools is one-to-one Reading Recovery® tutoring in grade one for students needing help beyond good classroom instruction. Moreover, many schools utilize small group tutoring as an additional safety net and other support services for children who need continuing help in later grades and for children who are new entries to the school.

Home Outreach Program

Schools in the Literacy Collaborative are required to have a home book program. Children at every grade level participate in home reading through lending libraries established at the classroom level. A parent outreach program may include inexpensive little books that children first read in school and then take home. These books may be produced by children or teachers and reproduced for all children in grades K to 2. Many Literacy Collaborative schools use the KEEP BOOKS® program as part of their parent outreach (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).[1] The KEEP BOOKS program provides an infusion of readable material into the homes of young children.

Originally designed for home use, KEEP BOOKS have been shown to be useful and effective in classroom settings as well. KEEP BOOKS are brief paperback books with colorful covers and interesting stories. The texts of these books are specially designed to support the development of effective reading strategies. Children are introduced to a book at school, read it several times, and then take it home to "keep." A structured program of instruction also teaches children to collect, care for, and use the books during at-home reading. Over 150 titles, including a sequential "phonics" set and 16 titles in Spanish, are available on a non-profit basis for the very low cost (25 cents per book) of printing and managing the program. A no-cost guide for teachers accompanies each set of books.

Materials

Literacy Collaborative schools invest in two kinds of book collections: (1) a school-wide collection of leveled books housed in a central location, from which teachers select titles for guided reading instruction and students' independent reading; and, (2) classroom collections of a wide range of quality children's literature for instructional activities such as reading aloud, genre study, inquiry projects, and book discussions.

School-Based Leadership Component

Evidence from research on educational innovation indicates that a team approach involving a school staff with a common vision is essential for sustaining and succeeding in any change effort (Fullan, 1985, 1992; Wilson & Daviss, 1994). A large body of research has revealed that teacher training is the critical factor in making a difference in achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The Literacy Collaborative involves the school-based leadership team in long-term commitment to share goals for student achievement and the ongoing tasks necessary to accomplish them.

School capacity for staff development is created through the preparation of a literacy coordinator for each school. This school-based teacher educator provides initial and continuing training for the staff. Training is intensive and focuses on research-based classroom-tested techniques. Evaluation data are gathered on every student and provided to the school staff for self-evaluation.

[1] *For more information about KEEP BOOKS®, contact Ordering/Shipping Department, The Ohio State University, 1-800-678-6484.*

Commitment

School leaders pledge a five-year commitment to the training, implementation, and data gathering specified for schools in the Literacy Collaborative network. Staff members in the school make a commitment to participation in ongoing training and in-class coaching as well as to implementation of instructional approaches in classrooms.

Local Leadership

A trained literacy coordinator works with a literacy team composed of primary classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, Title 1 teachers, reading specialists, special education teachers, the school principal, and other educators the staff wishes to add to the team. As schools expand the program to include development in the intermediate grades, the team is expanded. The school team develops and implements a local plan to support professional development and data gathering.

Professional Development Component

The key to successful implementation is a dynamic and intensive professional development program for teachers to effectively use well designed instructional techniques. Teachers need supportive and ongoing training. Professional development is required for all teachers in Literacy Collaborative schools. Since voluntary training has more potential for success, teachers are asked to make a commitment before the school enters the project. The school principal typically asks prospective new staff members over the years to make similar commitments before taking a job at the school. Providing successful professional development is a complex process that must take into account teachers' individuality and diverse backgrounds of experience; therefore, schools do not proceed in a "lock step" manner. Literacy coordinators work collaboratively with school staff members and with the building administrator to find the best ways to involve all staff.

Professional Development of Literacy Coordinators

During their initial training, literacy coordinators participate in a yearlong course that includes seven weeks of training at a certified Literacy Collaborative university training site. The process involves a cycle of university-assisted learning, peer interaction, individual practice, and reflection (Button, 1992). Training includes university classes, coaching, and demonstration incorporating site visits; videotape analysis, and feedback by university trainers. After their initial year of training, literacy coordinators attend yearly professional development institutes.

Staff Development and Support

Following their training year, literacy coordinators develop and provide a long-term professional development program for their building staff that integrates theory and practice through study groups, in-class demonstration lessons, and classroom coaching.

Reflective Practice and In-class Coaching

Reflection is a key assessment tool utilized by the Literacy Collaborative to strengthen the instructional process. Teachers continually reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching through discussions, videotape analysis, and systematic observation of students' progress. A salient feature of the Literacy Collaborative professional development program is in-class coaching of teachers by the literacy coordinator. The literacy coordinator follows up inservice session content by going into classrooms on a regular basis to demonstrate techniques, consult with teachers, and coach teachers while they try new approaches and refine their teaching over time. Coaching is a key factor in school change (Joyce & Showers, 1980, 1982).

The Growth of the Literacy Collaborative

The Literacy Collaborative began in response to a need for a staff development model that would offer classroom teachers ongoing support in learning new ways of teaching reading and writing. In 1986, staff members at The Ohio State University and teachers from area schools began a collaborative effort to improve classroom literacy programs. They developed the curriculum framework and classroom approaches; this work was later expanded and refined as a staff development program.

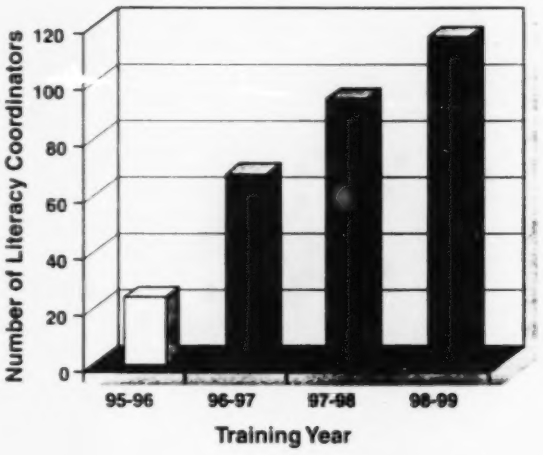
During the 1989 –1990 school year, a pilot study involved kindergarten teachers from Columbus Public Schools in learning how to teach for strategies and skills in their literacy lessons. Teachers attended a yearlong university class.

Instruction was videotaped and teachers reflected upon and refined their teaching. Examination of data from classrooms provided evidence of gains in student achievement as measured by scores on Clay's *Observation Survey of Literacy Achievement* (1993).

Subsequently, work began on a model for broader dissemination of the training. The goal was to develop a model for expanding capacity at the building level by training a local leader for each school. During one year of intensive training, these local leaders, called literacy coordinators, would develop the knowledge and skills needed to support the other teachers in their buildings in learning new approaches and refining their literacy instruction. School development was seen as a long-term process requiring several years of effort. The first group of literacy coordinators participated in training during the 1993 – 1994 school year. Every year since then, a new group of literacy coordinators has participated in training.

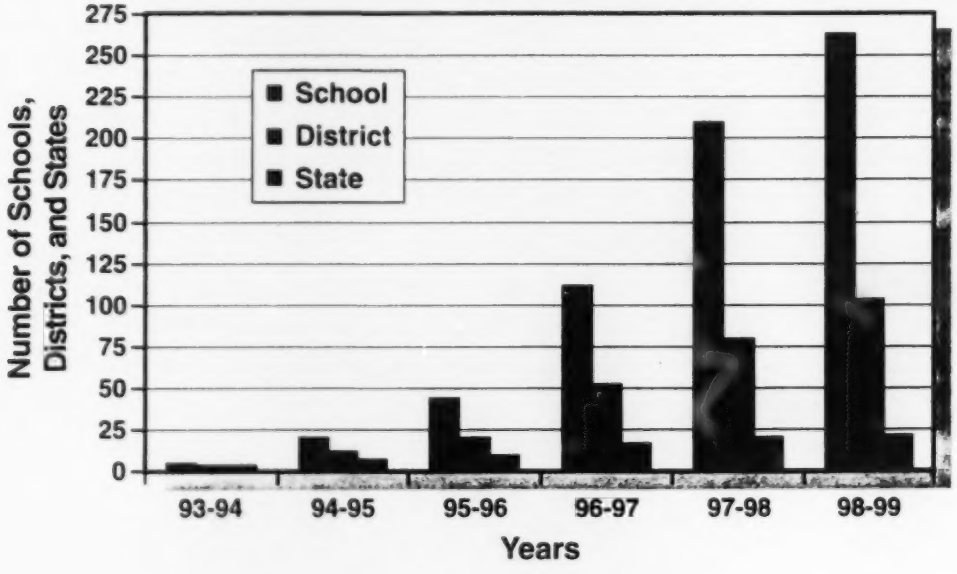
In order to expand the role of the Literacy Collaborative and make training more accessible, several universities have joined the network as partners. In addition, the role of district-level literacy coordinator was established. One regional education office and several regional consortia of districts have also joined the network. A two-year professional development program was designed to prepare personnel for leadership roles at district, regional, and university levels.

Figure 2 - Number of literacy coordinators trained each year



Establishing a university, regional, or district-level site requires several years of effort, including training personnel and developing school sites where literacy coordinators in training can observe instructional approaches first-hand. Literacy Collaborative partners are listed in the back of this report. The map in Figure 3 illustrates the growth of the Literacy Collaborative across the U.S. at all training sites. At the end of the 1998-99 school year, the Literacy Collaborative network included 263 schools representing 103 districts in 21 states (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

Figure 1 - The growth of the Literacy Collaborative from 1993-94 to 1998-99



Literacy Collaborative Sites across the United States

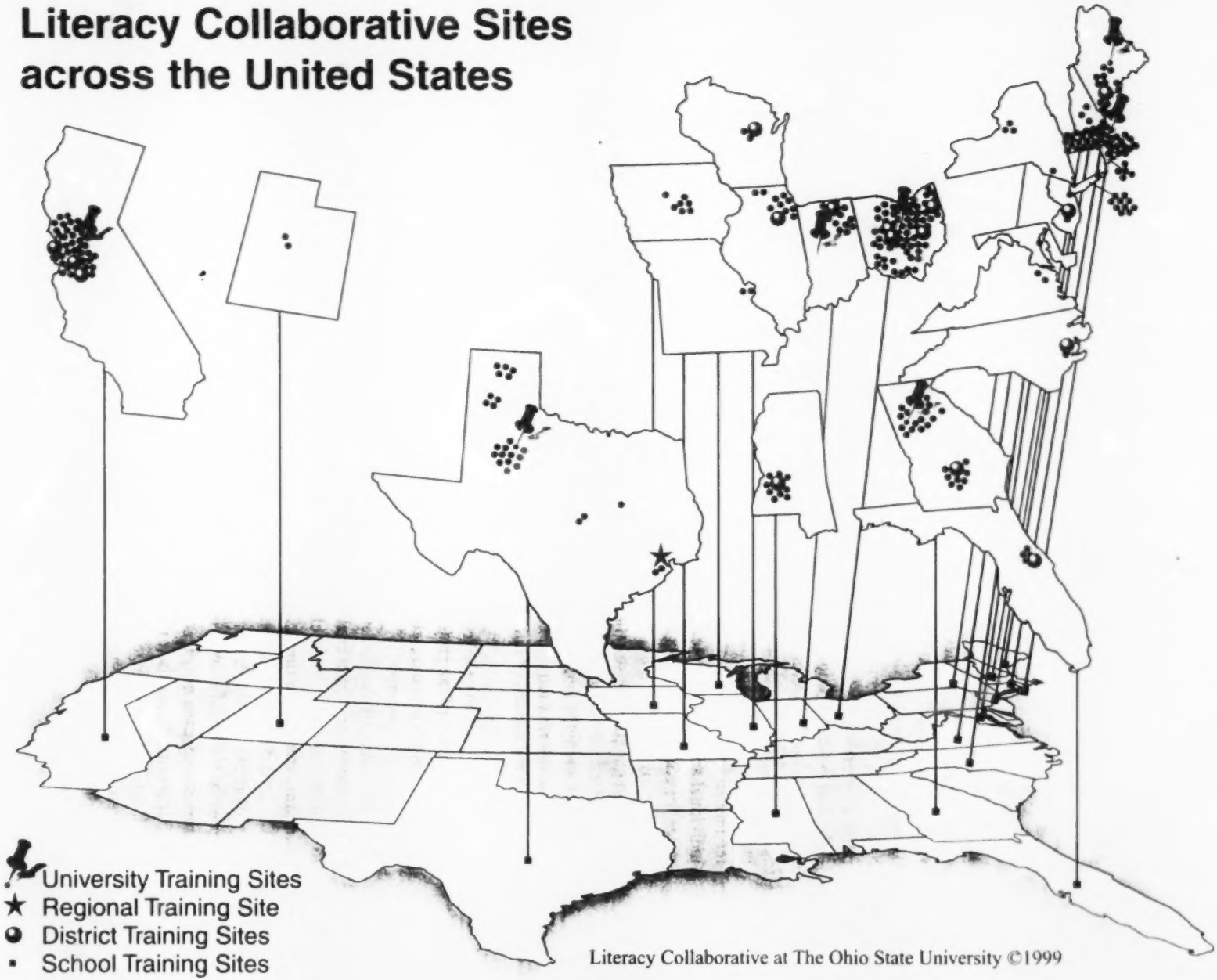

University Training Sites
Regional Training Site
District Training Sites
School Training Sites
Literacy Collaborative at The Ohio State University ©1999

Figure 3

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Section II: Research/ Evaluation Design for Literacy Collaborative Schools

The overall goal for the Literacy Collaborative[8] is to raise the level of literacy achievement of kindergarten, first, and second grade students. As part of the pilot work at the intermediate level, a data collection system has been designed for assessing progress of children throughout the elementary grades. Schools that select to implement Literacy Collaborative at intermediate levels will phase in the data collection system through grade five or six, depending on the structure of the school.

The Literacy Collaborative research design institutes fall-fall data collection using a variety of reading and writing assessments, including both individual and group administrations. The purposes for collecting data on each child in Literacy Collaborative schools are to:

1. inform classroom instruction by providing systematically collected information on each child's strengths and knowledge base;
2. provide information enabling teachers to analyze the growth of individual students over time;
3. provide a basis for a school staff to analyze improvements of the project over time; and,
4. inform research and development of the Literacy Collaborative.

Results are provided to Literacy Collaborative schools each year, which enables school officials to evaluate curricula and teaching methodology by examining trends over time.

The goal of data collection in the first year of the project is to establish a baseline for the purpose of historical comparisons. The literacy coordinators are the only teachers implementing the framework during their training year; so, in effect, school wide change has not yet begun. Children in the school participate in the existing instructional program. During the next year, classroom teachers gradually phase in the new approaches. Thus, fall testing in the first two years of the project forms a baseline for subsequent years.

A cohort consists of a "grade level" group of children. Teachers in the Literacy Collaborative look at each cohort of children and their achievement scores. Recognizing that the cohorts are made up of different groups of children, their goal is to look for trends over time, asking, "Are we achieving higher scores, over time, as each new cohort of children experiences our educational program?" Each year the literacy coordinator and school planning team prepare a report that describes the school program, goals accomplished during the year, and student outcomes. The Literacy Collaborative requires that the reading and writing data be collected from every student in kindergarten, grade one, and grade two. Many schools collect additional data to inform their instruction and program design. Two examples are: (1) schools involved in development of Literacy Collaborative in the intermediate grades that collect additional data, and (2) some schools that have collected fall to spring data on some measures.

Bilingual Students within the Literacy Collaborative Training Centers/Sites

Presently, literacy coordinators support bilingual teachers at 32 sites in six states. These teachers deliver the Literacy Collaborative instructional framework in Spanish. To assess student progress in kindergarten, first, and second grade, Spanish-speaking students are administered Spanish versions of the Literacy Collaborative fall assessments. *Aprenda 2* (Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement, 1997), a standardized reading test for Spanish students, is administered in the fall to second grade Spanish-speaking students.[9]

Instrumentation

The four measures used to evaluate the Literacy Collaborative are described below:

- Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (HRSW). This task is a measure of the child's knowledge of relationships between letters and sounds in words. The assessor reads a sentence to the child and then reads it again slowly, asking the child to try to write the words. Products are scored as to the number of phonemes accurately represented through sound analysis. Two dictation assessments

[9] *Data from the* Aprenda *are not included in this report but will be reported separately when bilingual schools have participated in the project for 4 years.*

exist: (1) five forms of sentences to be used in kindergarten and grade 1 (Maximum score = 37) (Clay, 1993); and (2) one sentence for grade 2 children (Maximum score = 64) (DeFord, Pinnell, Lyons, & Place, 1990). The sentence for grade 2 children is scored for both phoneme representation and accurate spelling, yielding two scores.

- Benchmark Text Reading Assessment. Benchmark texts were constructed to determine students' ability to read, with 90 percent accuracy or better, text(s) at their appropriate grade levels. Benchmark testing is recommended by the New Standards Primary Literacy Committee (New Standards Primary Literacy Committee, Center for Education and the Economy, 1999).[3]
- Fluency. A 4-point Likert-type scale to record ratings is used by the teacher to assess each child's ability to read with fluency and phrasing. Fluency and phrasing are characteristics related to comprehension (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Pinnell, Pikulski, Wixson, Campbell, Gough, & Beatty, 1995).[4]
- Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (3rd Ed., 1989). The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level 1, Form K) is administered to all grade 2 students in each building. This test series has empirical norms for fall and spring, established in the fall of 1987 and spring of 1988 (MacGinitie & MacGinitie, 1989).

Validity

To verify the validity of the kindergarten and first grade assessment measures, the kindergarten, first grade, and second grade HRSW (second grade scored for both phoneme representation and spelling) and fluency assessment measures were correlated with students' scores on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test Subscales: Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, and Total Reading. Results were similar to the 1998 findings (Williams, 1998); all correlations were significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) (see Table 1).

Thus, it can be stated that the kindergarten, first, and second grade HRSW, spelling, and fluency assessments validly measure a child's ability to recognize and understand/comprehend what he/she has read, ranging from single words to passages.

Table 1 - Pearson Correlations between student HRSW, spelling, fluency and Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test performance for students in kindergarten in 1996-97, first grade in 1997-98, and second grade in 1998-99

	Fall 1996 Kindergarten HRSW	Fall 1997 First Grade HRSW	Fall 1997 First Grade Book 2 Fluency	Fall 1998 Grade 2 HSIW Phonemic Awareness	Fall 1998 Grade 2 HSIW Spelling	Gates Fall 1998 NCE on Vocabulary	Gates Fall 1998 NCE on Reading Comp	Gates Fall 1998 NCE on Total Reading
Fall 1996 Kindergarten HRSW	----	.510** (n=1424)	.439** (n=965)	.341** (n=1037)	.444** (n=1036)	.432** (n=1007)	.409** (n=1007)	.441** (n=1007)
Fall 1997 First Grade HRSW		----	.569** (n=1423)	.489** (n=1374)	.565** (n=1373)	.580** (n=1323)	.567** (n=1323)	.597** (n=1323)
Fall 1997 First Grade Book 2 Fluency			----	.330** (n=974)	.469** (n=973)	.483** (n=930)	.457** (n=930)	.494** (n=930)
Fall 1998 Grade 2 HSIW Phonemic Awareness				----	.733** (n=1916)	.686** (n=1811)	.635** (n=1811)	.689** (n=1811)
Fall 1998 Grade 2 HSIW Spelling					----	.761** (n=1810)	.694** (n=1810)	.756** (n=1810)
Gates Fall 1998 NCE on Vocabulary						----	.824** (n=1867)	.948** (n=1867)
Gates Fall 1998 NCE on Reading Comp							----	.944** (n=1867)
Gates Fall 1998 NCE on Total Reading								----

*[3] Benchmark testing is used by teachers to monitor student progress. Benchmark texts are being tested and validated. Data on benchmark testing are not included in this report. [4] Fluency assessment is not included in this report. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

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Section III: Results from Twelve Schools, Fall 1995-Fall 1998

Yearly data collection not only provides important information for individual Literacy Collaborative schools, but also creates a database for analyzing trends across schools over time. Data are also collected through interviews and surveys to study the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative. For purposes of this report, four research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the patterns of change in second graders' performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test for schools that have been in the Literacy Collaborative network for at least four years?
2. How does performance on Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words (HRSW) shift from kindergarten to first grade in Literacy Collaborative schools?
3. How does performance on Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words and Text Reading Level tasks (Clay, 1993) shift from fall to spring of first grade in two Literacy Collaborative schools?
4. How do educators in five schools respond to implementation of the Literacy Collaborative?

School Sites

For this report, we examine the progress of twelve schools that were selected for this analysis based on the following criteria:

1. The school has been a Literacy Collaborative school at least four years making it possible to examine results over time.
2. The school's staff are members of Literacy Collaborative network and working toward implementation.
3. The literacy coordinator has been at the school since the beginning of his/her training. He/she has not taken a leave of absence, transferred, or resigned during this time.

School Demographics

Twelve schools met the above criteria:

- School A. One school entered the project in 1993-94 by training a literacy coordinator.
- Schools B, C, D, and E. These schools entered the project in 1994-1995.
- Schools F, G, H, I, J, K, and L. These schools entered the project in 1995-1996.

Eleven of the twelve schools are in the Midwest; one school is in the Eastern United States. Schools A, B, C, E, G, H, I, K, and L are urban schools; School D is a city school; J is a suburban school; and, F is a small town/rural school.

Results of achievement data must be interpreted against a backdrop of information on each school. Tables 2 and 3 display demographic information for students in each school. Schools in this report are representative of others in the Literacy Collaborative in that they include diverse economic populations.

On Free and Reduced Priced Lunch (FRPL) status, schools range from one school with very few children receiving free or reduced lunch (10%) to several schools with a very high percentage receiving free or reduced lunch (97.0% to 99.6%). Similarly, diversity is found within and among schools. For example, School D serves a largely Caucasian population; the majority of students in School B, E, G, I, and K are African-American. Other schools have more diverse student populations.

Table 2 - Race/Ethnicity of all students in the second grade cohort by school for 1998-99

	All Second Grade Students Fall 1998					
School		Caucasian	African-American	Asian	Hispanic	Other
	N	%	%	%	%	%
A	100	65.0	30.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
B	39	20.5	69.2	0.0	0.0	10.3
C	28	64.3	35.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
D	88	95.5	1.1	0.0	0.0	3.4
E	46	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
F	40	85.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
G	75	29.3	60.0	8.0	2.7	0.0
H	81	79.0	12.3	1.2	3.7	3.7
I	81	7.4	77.8	2.5	4.9	7.4
J	124	81.5	1.6	7.3	4.0	5.6
K	37	35.1	56.8	5.4	2.7	0.0
L	68	82.4	10.3	4.4	2.9	0.0

Table 3 - Free and Reduced Price Lunch status (FRPL) for Literacy Collaborative schools by year

Free and Reduced Price Lunch Status				
School	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
1994 Training Class				
A	58.0%	41.3%	51.4%	52.0%
1995 Training Class				
B	98.7%	95.2%	95.7%	97.8%
C	83.9%	84.7%	92.0%	97.0%
D	45.0%	47.0%	43.0%	60.0%
E	99.3%	98.7%	99.6%	99.6%
1996 Training Class				
F	----	66.0%	65.0%	65.4%
G	----	87.0%	89.2%	86.6%
H	----	82.0%	83.0%	84.0%
I	----	71.3%	69.0%	88.0%
J	----	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
K	----	92.6%	90.4%	79.9%
L	----	70.7%	72.4%	74.3%

Research Question #1:

What are the patterns of change in second graders' performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test for schools that have been in the Literacy Collaborative network for at least four years?

To address research question #1, we present three analyses. The first analysis will be patterns of NCE performance on Total Reading for all second grade students in 12 schools on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The second analysis will be a comparison of NCE gains for children who have remained in the same school from kindergarten to grade two with children who have not attended the same school. The third analysis is patterns of shifts in achievement groups (from low to high) in terms of quartiles and percentiles.

Analysis #1: Patterns of NCE Performance for Total Reading

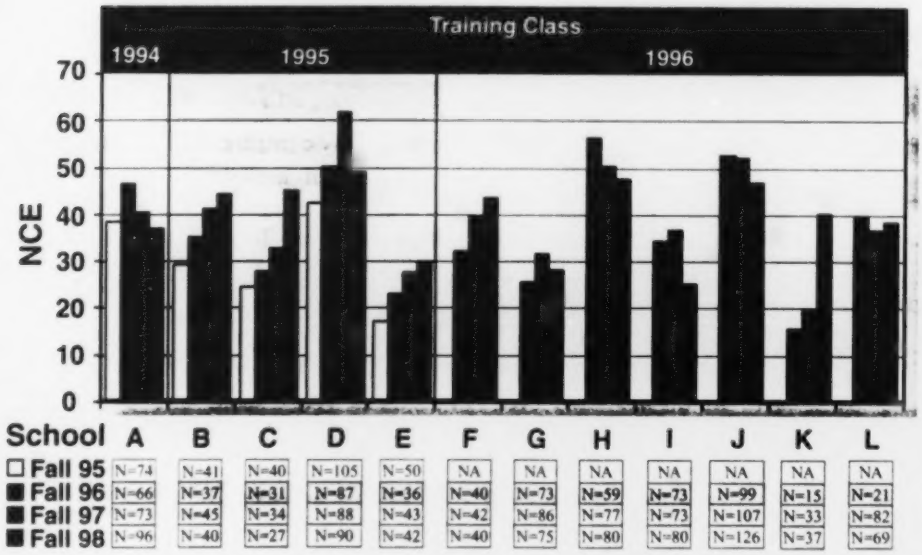
Second grade students in the schools were administered the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores were analyzed for each cohort of children over the years. An NCE, Normal Curve Equivalent, is a statistical transformation of percentile ranks in which reading achievement is divided into 99 equal units with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06. NCEs are generally considered to provide the truest indication of student growth in achievement since they provide comparative information in equal units of measurement. It should be kept in mind that NCEs are based on percentiles, which compare the student's performance in relation to the general population. An NCE of 50 represents where a student should be for his/her grade level. For a student's NCE score to remain the same at posttest as at pretest does not denote a lack of absolute progress; on the contrary, it means that the student has maintained the same relative position in terms of the general population. Even a small gain in NCEs indicates advancement from the student's original level of achievement.

Students included in Analysis

Figures are presented for *all students* in the second grade cohort on the given year. A major issue in most of the schools is that many students move frequently. Some students were new to the schools and received only partial exposure to the new instructional methods. For example, at School E during the 1996-97 school year, most of the school's student population was new because of a change in the district's busing policy. At School A, as displayed in Table 3, there was a substantial increase in the Free & Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) population, indicating a shift from 32.2% in 1993 to over 50% in 1998 (FRPL: 1993, 32.2%; 1995, 58%; 1996 – 41.3%, 1997 – 51.4%; 1998 – 52%). Staff members are working to meet the challenge of serving this new population.

In addition, it should be noted that teacher populations might have changed in buildings during this time period. Some teachers were new to the schools and had not yet experienced training. Therefore, schools were at various levels of partial implementation. One example of changes in the teaching populations occurred with the first grade teachers at School A; two of the four first grade teachers were on maternity leave for half of the 1996-97 school year. Another more severe

Figure 4 - Mean NCE performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test on Total Reading for second grade cohorts by school by year[a]



example has been occurring in School I, an urban school, where there has been continual turnover in the teaching population. School I is in a district that has expanded the Literacy Collaborative to additional elementary schools. Consequently, many teachers from School I have transferred within the district to other less urban schools that are also in the Literacy Collaborative. In addition, since the 1995-96 school year, School I has not had a trained Reading Recovery teacher for the entire school year. Each Reading Recovery teacher started the year and resigned partway through the school year, leaving the six first grade classes with no safety net support.

Trends

As indicated in Figure 4, seven schools showed a medium to strong upward trend (schools B, C, D, E, F, G, and K). Scores for these schools in fall 1998 were above baseline scores taken in 1995 or 1996. Dramatic improvement was noted in Schools B, C, D, E, F, and K, all of which had high proportions of students with free or reduced price lunch status. We can learn from the characteristics of implementation in these schools. Regular observations, site visits, and a survey of literacy coordinators reveal the following summary of implementation characteristics at schools showing the highest gains in achievement:

- A strong school-based literacy team had regular meetings to oversee the implementation of the program.
- Teachers had over 2 hours of quality time for daily language arts/literacy instruction.
- Most of the instructional elements included in the literacy framework were implemented in classrooms during the language arts/reading block, and teachers were working toward a higher level of implementation.
- The principal understood the project and was actively involved in meetings and leadership.
- A large component of the staff (over 80%) participated in the initial training program, including being visited and coached in their classrooms as they implemented the new techniques.
- The initial training course involved consistent meetings and over 30 hours of training time.
- Literacy coordinators in the schools had adequate release time to serve the teachers who were participating; this service included regular visits to classrooms to provide demonstration lessons and coaching.
- Teachers who completed the initial course continued to meet regularly with the literacy coordinator to refine teaching techniques.
- Adequate text materials were available to support guided reading; materials were well organized and easily accessible to teachers.
- There was adequate Reading Recovery coverage to serve the lowest achieving first graders in one-to-one tutoring.
- The Reading Recovery teachers and literacy coordinators worked closely together.
- There was a general atmosphere of mutual support among staff members in the school; teachers helped each other and worked collaboratively with the literacy coordinator.

In five schools, the results were mixed. Schools A and L had "flat results," where little change occurred and three schools (H, I, and J) had a

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[a] *Fall 1995 was the first year that a standardized test was administered for evaluation purposes within the Literacy Collaborative project. Literacy coordinators in these schools did not administer the Gates during their training years. Literacy coordinators in Schools B through E were trained in 1994-95; Literacy coordinators in Schools F through L were trained in 1995-96. Consequently, only one year of baseline data is available for all the schools in the table.*

Table 4 - Mean NCE performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Subtests for second grade cohorts

Fall 98 Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	Grade 2 Students	Attendance	Mean	StdDev	n
Reading Comprehension	Not in Same School K-2	Students not new to the school & absent < 20 days in 1997-98	39.49	20.60	205
		Students new to school or absent 20 or more days in 1997-98	28.70	20.18	27
	In the Same School for K-2	Students not new to the school & absent < 20 days in 1997-98	46.84	19.88	396
		Students new to school or absent 20 or more days in 1997-98	31.97	22.66	37
Total Reading	Not in Same School K-2	Students not new to the school & absent < 20 days in 1997-98	37.67	20.85	205
		Students new to school or absent 20 or more days in 1997-98	28.44	17.93	27
	In the Same School for K-2	Students not new to the school & absent < 20 days in 1997-98	44.93	19.88	396
		Students new to school or absent 20 or more days in 1997-98	30.03	22.12	37

decline in scores. Although many positive changes were occurring in all schools, there were issues related to the involvement and commitment of the principal, the existence and function of a literacy team, and time for coaching teachers in classrooms so that instructional approaches are used effectively rather than at a superficial level. Schools that did not demonstrate gains tended to experience more changes in staff, including at least two schools that lost principals.

All schools in the project struggled with issues related to time, but most reported that they managed to find between 2 and 2 1/2 hours of time for reading and the language arts. So, time, itself, did not seem to be a discriminating factor between schools with high gains and others. The time must be available, but what happens during that time is just as important. And, some teachers need more time to implement and refine the new approaches. It is also important to point out that three (H, I, J) of the schools reporting no gains had very low coverage in Reading Recovery. One school lost the Reading Recovery teachers during the year and had no coverage. Many of the lowest first graders in these schools were not being served in one-to-one tutoring.

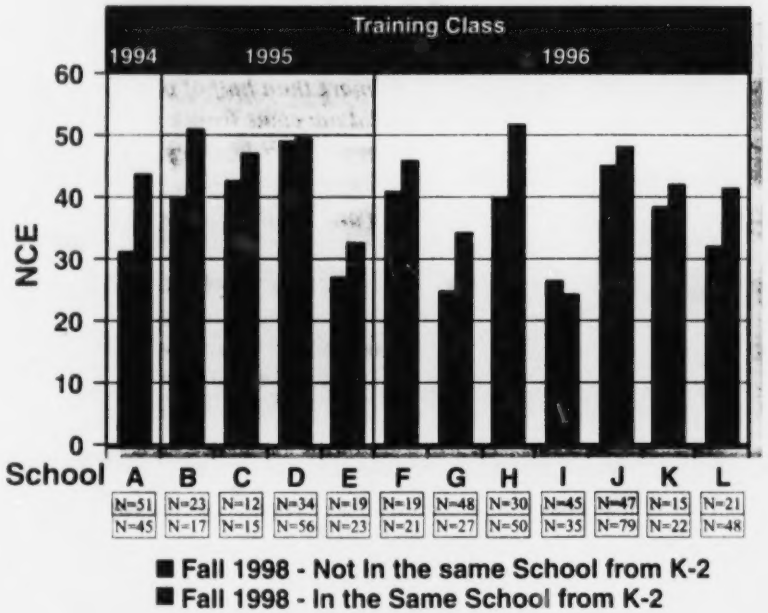
A higher level of support from literacy coordinators, regular in-class coaching, and strong leadership from the building administrators will figure into individual school plans for improvement.

Analysis #2: NCE Scores for Children Attending the Same School from Kindergarten to Grade Two

Students who were in the same school from kindergarten through second grade were compared with cohorts of students who did not attend the same school from kindergarten through second grade. This analysis was completed to determine whether consistency in instruction would make a difference in student achievement.

For comparisons using mobility and attendance as group characteristics, results for all students are shown in Table 4. Results by school are graphically displayed in Figure 5. These results indicate that consistency of instruction did make a difference. When we compared the average performance of

Figure 5 - Mean NCE performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Total Reading Subtest for second grade cohorts by school for Fall 1998



students who were at the same school from kindergarten through second grade with the performance of students who were not in the school during that entire period of time, the average NCE was much higher for students who experienced the school's program during all three years. The difference was noted in every school except School I, where results and observations indicate problems in implementation of instructional approaches and consistency was not achieved.

Although students who were at the same school had results that were significantly higher on the fall 1998 administration of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test than the second grade students who were not at the same school from kindergarten through second grade, these results must be interpreted with caution because students who move less may tend to score higher in general. These results do support the idea that students need consistent instruction in combination with remaining in the same school for the first three years. Mobility is a problem that could be addressed at the district level; meanwhile, school staff members are working for greater communication with parents in order to help them see the importance of remaining in one school.

13 The average NCE was much higher for students who experienced the school's program during all three years.

A principal, grappling with the problems of mobility, confirmed that consistency of instruction makes a difference:

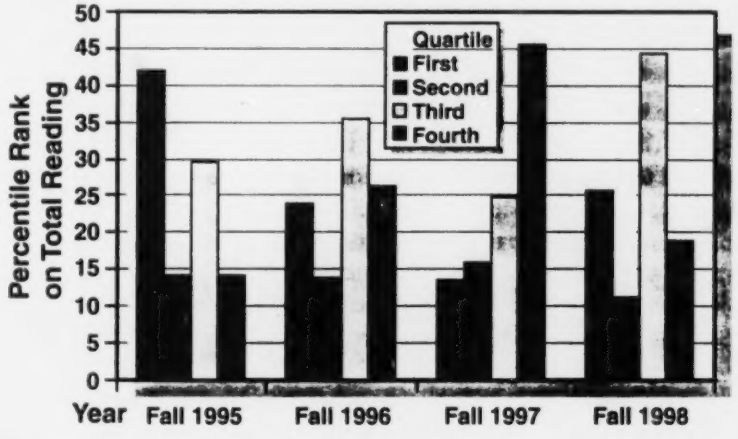
We found that more than half of our secona grade population did not come from our school. We were able to compare our Literacy Collaborative second graders and non-Literacy Collaborative second graders and see a big difference in the initial assessment. Those who scored lower, for the most part, were from either schools of the district (with no LC) or schools from other districts around the country. The same is true for our first grade which has few children who came from our kindergartens. ...Instead of our teachers becoming frustrated with this problem, it solidified our commitment to the program because we know that our children who have had a solid LC background can move to another school with strategies that will help them adjust to any program.

Analysis #3: Patterns of Shifts in Achievement

Average scores represent one way to look at a school's success record. We also need to look at the distribution of student scores across quartiles from the lowest (#1) to highest (#4). These quartiles are specified by the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test using national norms. A goal of the Literacy Collaborative is to move students from the lower quartiles into average and above average quartiles of achievement.

For each school, we looked at the percentage of children in each quartile over the years of participation in the project. This analysis revealed that a shift occurred in six schools; that is, there were fewer children in the lowest quartile and a higher number of children in middle and upper quartiles. For example, in School B there were 75.6% of children in lowest quartile and 2.4% in the highest quartile in 1995 as compared to 37.5% in the lowest quartile and 12.5% in the highest quartile in 1998. In School C, there were 62.5% of children in the lowest quartile achievement group in 1995 and 0.0% children in the highest quartile in 1995 as compared to 29.6% and 3.7% in 1998. School E showed a similar pattern from 86% low quartile and 0.0% high quartile (1995) to 61.9% low and 7.1% high (1998). School K moved from 85.2% low and 3.7% high in 1995 to 45.9% low and 13.5% high in 1998. School G did experience a gain in mean scores but did not have a shift in quartile distribution. The schools that experienced flat scores or declining scores did not change in quartile distribution. Changes in quartile status are graphically illustrated in Figure 6, showing the pattern of shift for School D, which has been

Figure 6 - Shifts in achievement distribution by quartile in School D



involved in the project for four years.

Figure 6 shows the population in the school moving from a large proportion of students in the lower two quartiles to a more normal distribution across the four achievement quartiles. Work continues in the schools to reduce the number of students in the lowest quartile with a corresponding gain of number of students in quartiles 2, 3, and 4.

For the other schools (B, C, E, F, and K) that had the greatest mean score gains on Total Reading, we look deeper into how that gain occurred. In these schools, the number and percentage of lower achieving children is decreasing while the number and percentage of higher achieving children is increasing over time (see Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11). It is important to note that all six of these schools have adequate Reading Recovery service for the population in the school.

In addition to "pulling children up from the bottom" across time, the average performance of the second grade cohorts in these schools has increased over time. One way to increase the mean score is by raising scores of children in the top quartile; but this is <u>not</u> what occurred here. The average performance increased from one cohort to the next across time <u>and</u> the number and percentage of children in the lowest quartile decreased. It is important to note that these schools exhibited the characteristics of successful implementation listed under Analysis #1.

Figure 7 - Distribution of students in School B

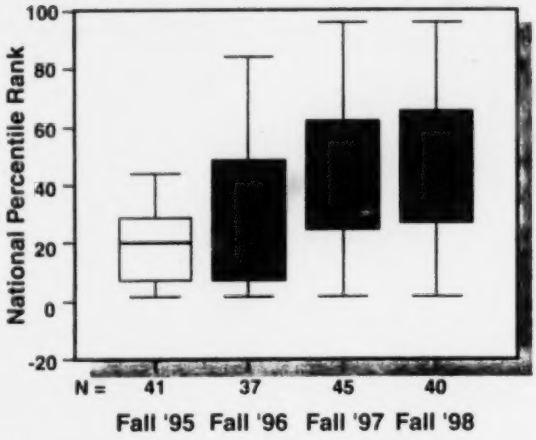


Figure 8 - Distribution of students in School K

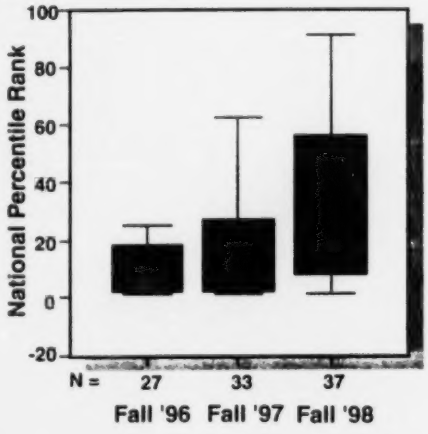


Figure 9 - Distribution of students in School C

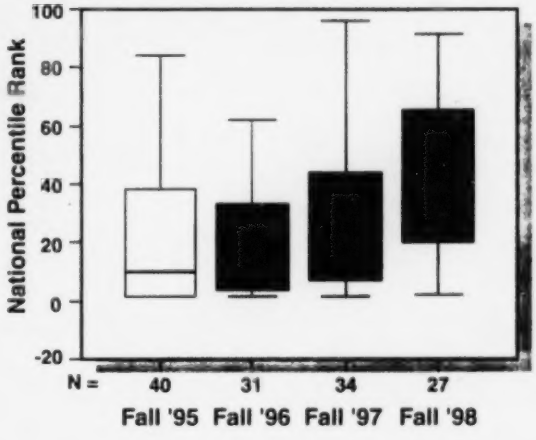
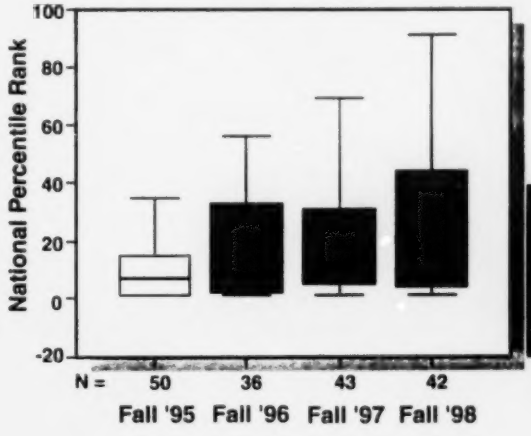


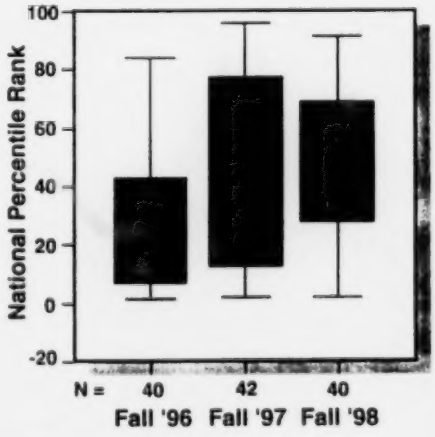
Figure 10 - Distribution of students in School E



Research Question #2:

How does performance on the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words Task (HRSW) shift from kindergarten to first grade in Literacy Collaborative schools?

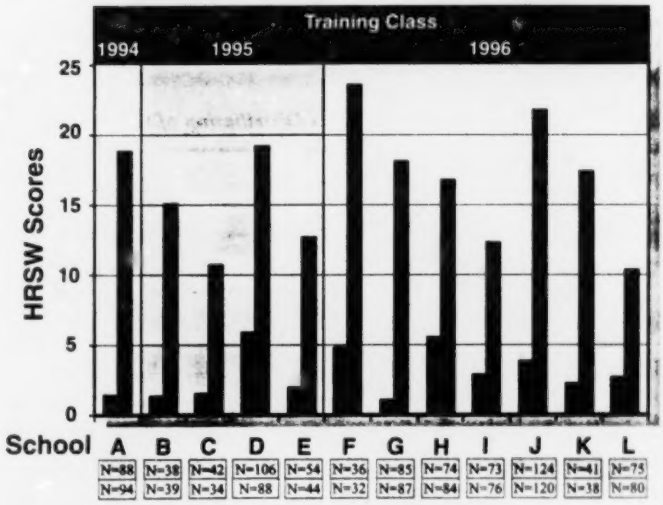
Figure 11 - Distribution of students in School F



Examining the growth in scores from fall of kindergarten to fall of first grade for the same group of students is a way of documenting the effectiveness of the kindergarten program in teaching important early concepts such as phonological awareness, discussed in Section I of this report. Students' ability

to hear the sequential sounds in words and to represent them with letters and letter clusters is a critical component of beginning literacy. As shown in Figure 12, scores on entry to kindergarten for all 12 schools were low, with mean scores well below 5 and in some schools near 0. Stanine scores constructed for the HRSW test (Clay, 1993) provide that to be in stanines four or above, students should have a score of at least 16 in fall of the first grade year. In Schools A, D, F, G, H, J,

Figure 12 - Mean Performance for kindergarten and first grade students on HRSW by group within school



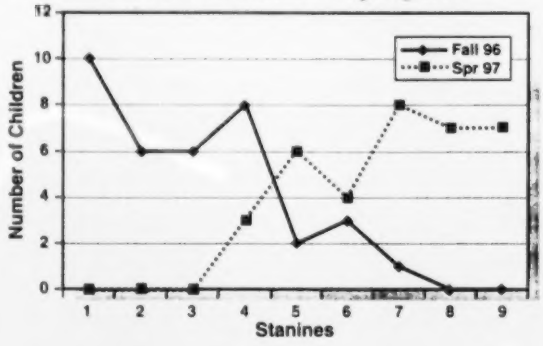
and K, the mean scores for fall first graders are above 16. In addition, as is noted in Figure 12, all schools demonstrated learning in this area. Some schools with high mean scores for HRSW did not demonstrate high gains on the Gates-MacGinitie reading test, indicating that while kindergarten programs were teaching children phonics and writing skills, more effort may be needed in the area of small group instruction including reading continuous text, extending the meaning of texts, and more advanced word study.

Research Question #3:

How does performance on the Dictation (HRSW) and Text Reading Level tasks (Clay, 1993) shift from fall to spring of first grade in two Literacy Collaborative schools?

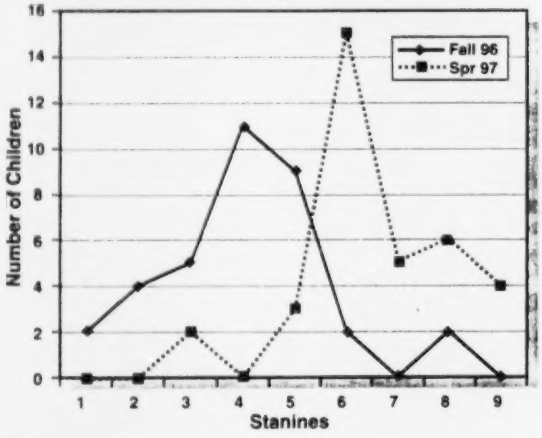
The Literacy Collaborative requires the collection of fall-fall data for *all* students. Two of the schools in this report (B and C) have collected

Figure 13 - Number of first grade children achieving Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words stanines at School B. Fall 1996-Spring 1997



additional data to measure student achievement on all first grade children during the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. Assessments administered by both of these schools to examine their school program included Text Reading Level (TRL) and HRSW. Both of these assessments are part of Clay's *Observation Survey of Literacy Achievement* (1993). Fall and spring stanine results revealed similar trends for both schools. Each year, the groups of first grade students showed a positive shift in the stanine distribution from fall to spring, with the greatest shift demonstrated by HRSW results.

Figure 14 - Number of first grade children achieving Text Reading Level stanines at School B. Fall 1996-Spring 1997



School B

School B is a Title 1 school-wide building in an urban setting serving approximately 310 students. In addition to being a Literacy Collaborative school with Reading Recovery support, over 100 community members come to the school each week to tutor students individually in reading and writing.

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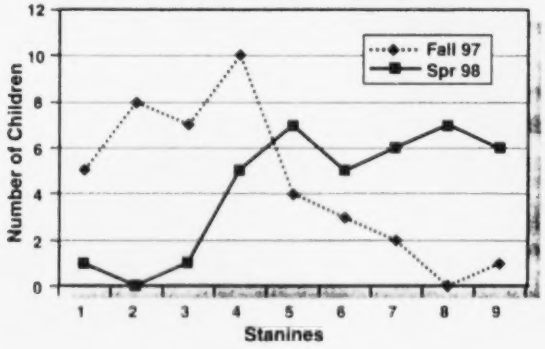
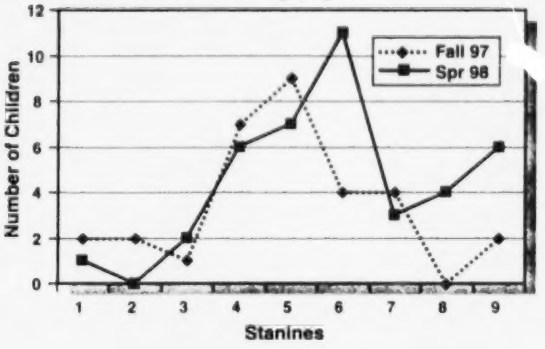
Figure 15 - Number of first grade children achieving Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words stanines at School B. Fall 1997-Spring 1998



Figures 13 through 16 display the stanine frequency distributions of Text Reading Level and HRSW scores for first grade students at School B in the fall and spring of the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. For stanines, as with NCEs, when a child remains at the same stanine level from pretest to posttest, that student has maintained the same relative position in terms of the general population. Even a small gain denotes growth beyond what would be expected for that time period and grade level.

Figure 16 - Number of first grade children achieving Text Reading Level stanines at School B. Fall 1997-Spring 1998

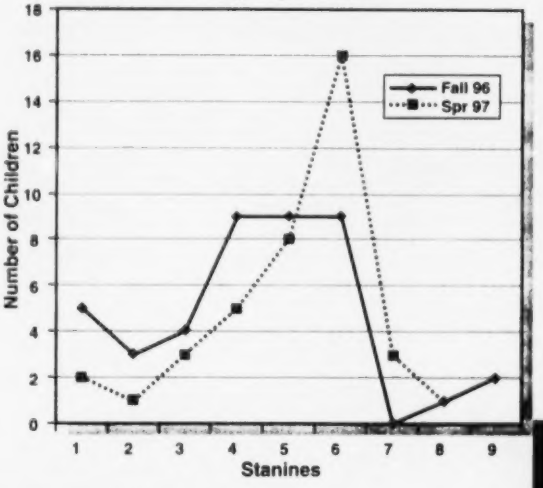


In fall 1996, most of the first grade students in School B (see Figure 14) read at a level that was expected for first grade, while in spring 1997 most of these children were reading at a higher level than was expected for first grade students. A stronger pattern is seen for the HRSW results displayed in Figure 13. This is a remarkable achievement for any student, but is particularly impressive for this population. This pattern of achievement continued through the 1997-98 school year (see Figures 15 and 16).

School C

School C is located in a small Midwestern city and serves about 150 children. Large proportions of the students come from families who live at or below the poverty line. Like many schools that serve impoverished families, there is a high student mobility rate. All of the teachers in this building have participated in Literacy Collaborative training.

Figure 17 - Number of first grade children achieving Text Reading Level stanines at School C. Fall - Spring 1996-97



Frequency stanine distributions for first grade students' results at School C on TRL and HRSW are similar to School B, although a little less dramatic. Nonetheless, growth exceeds that which would be expected for first grade students (see Figures 17 through 20).

First grade students at both Schools B and C produced the most noticeable stanine shifts demonstrated by the HRSW assessment, with a lesser shift in reading, as measured by the TRL assessment. *Dramatic stanine shifts occurred during both school years, ensuring that these shifts were not a one-time event.*

Figure 18 - Number of first grade children achieving Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words stanines at School C. Fall - Spring 1996-97

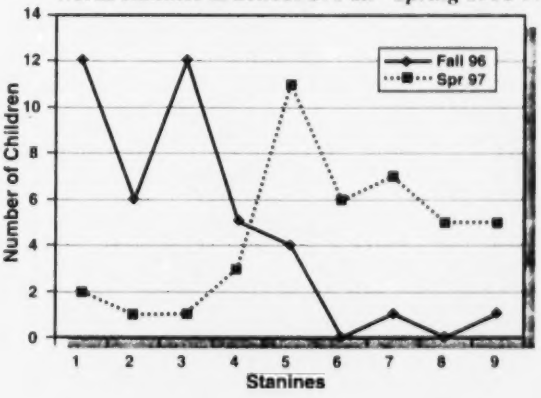


Figure 19 - Number of first grade children achieving Text Reading Level stanines at School C. Fall - Spring 1997-98

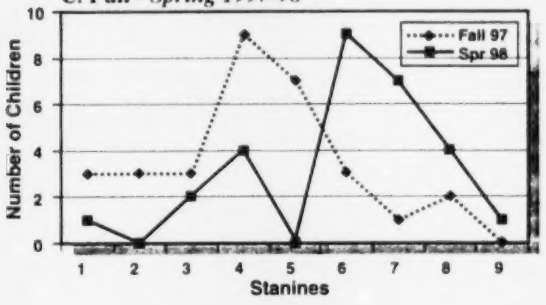
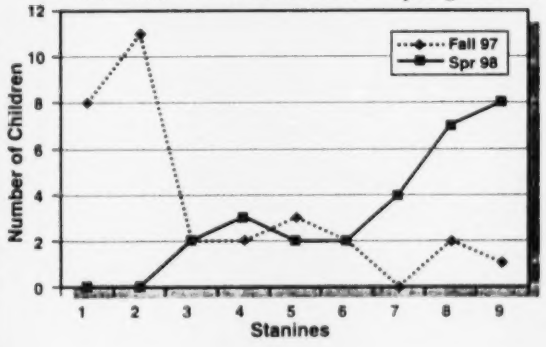


Figure 20 - Number of first grade children achieving Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words stanines at School C. Fall - Spring 1997-98



As teachers work hard and see important results, they work even harder to accelerate learning, providing a cyclical effect supporting improvements in teaching and learning.

17

Research Question #4:

How do educators in five schools respond to implementation of the Literacy Collaborative?

The five schools in this section represent a range of schools from urban to suburban, and include schools that have been a part of the Literacy Collaborative network for several years to a school that is relatively new to the network. A richer picture of the impact of the Literacy Collaborative on teachers, administrators, and children during implementation is presented through the voices of educators italicized below.

The First School

The literacy coordinator at this school noted that,

because of the Literacy Collaborative training model, teachers became better observers of students and better able to guide their instruction more appropriately; learned to build from the students' strengths; and learned to scaffold the learning of all students, high, middle and low achievers. As teachers work hard and see important results, they work even harder to accelerate learning, providing a cyclical effect supporting improvements in teaching and learning. The Literacy Collaborative has given our teachers a common vision and focus in which to move instructionally.

Teachers at this school were asked to reflect upon their implementation of the Literacy Collaborative framework for literacy lessons in 1995-96 at the completion of their training, and again in fall 1998. Some significant trends were evident in their responses. Overall, their comments in 1995 reflected concerns regarding the procedures or mechanics associated with the various instructional approaches. Managing classroom activities and knowing how to meet the needs of students were also a concern for most of the teachers. While some expressed a few of the same challenges in particular elements, a shift in thinking was demonstrated on the 1998 survey. They were more concerned about making powerful teaching decisions, scaffolding the students' learning, and the pacing of lessons. It seemed obvious that their concerns moved beyond implementation to focus on refining and maximizing each teaching opportunity.

Interactive writing in Spanish.

The principal also observed that the climate for teaching and learning has changed since the school became a Literacy Collaborative school.

Of course, the impact on student achievement is impressive. But, what really impressed me was

the first time a child came to read to me. I am from the old school. If a child stops, you tell him the word. When this child got stuck, he knew just what to do. He cross-checked and self-corrected his own reading. These young readers are being taught how to help themselves—how to use strategies. It is wonderful to see such independence at such an early age.

The Second School

The second school is located in a large urban school district. Nearly all children in the school receive free or reduced-price lunches. The framework for literacy lessons has been embraced by all teachers in the building as a powerful instructional design. More importantly, teachers have developed a clearer understanding of how to be more effective in each instructional context. One kindergarten teacher talked about how she learned to meet the instructional needs of a wide range of students during interactive writing lessons. She remarked,

Teachers discuss and select books for guided reading.

The Literacy Collaborative has provided me with a framework for engaging all students and allowing all students to contribute their unique literacy knowledge during literacy lessons.

A first grade teacher elaborated on that comment saying,

I feel as though each and every one of us has been evolving as a more effective teacher by sharing literacy knowledge. I certainly believe that I am a better teacher than I was five years ago.

Since their participation in the Literacy Collaborative, the principal of this building noticed that there has been an increase in communication among teachers. When teachers attend staff meetings or the Literacy Collaborative professional development sessions or meet at lunchtime, they all speak a common language concerning literacy development and student assessment. One second grade teacher described these conversations in the following way:

As teachers, the primary staff has learned to look at children on a continuum of development. We talk positively about the strategies each child has and are confident that we can assist each child in learning more literacy strategies. As a second grade teacher I feel less overwhelmed when a child enters my classroom as an emergent or early reader.

According to the principal,

the students at our school have made consistent progress through the years. They have demonstrated consistent growth on both qualitative and quantitative assessments. I am very proud of the academic achievement of our students. I attribute this ongoing achievement to the dedicated staff and the ability of the literacy coordinator to encourage both students and staff to put forth their best efforts. The staff at our school fully credits the Literacy Collaborative with the academic achievement of our students and their sense of accomplishment felt from student progress.

These young readers are being taught how to help themselves - how to use strategies. It is wonderful to see such independence at such an early age.

The Third School

The third school is also an urban school that began its affiliation with Literacy Collaborative in 1995. This school has seen dramatic changes in student achievement that they credit to the Literacy Collaborative's structured framework for literacy lessons and the training design. The following excerpts are from the literacy coordinator's report:

The Literacy Collaborative has been the basis of our literacy program for four years. We have seen tremendous increases in student achievement in those four years. Our ultimate goal is for students to become independent, self-extending readers and writers. The staff agrees that the increase in our students' achievements is the direct result of the Literacy Collaborative's balanced approach to literacy instruction.

In evaluating the Literacy Collaborative at the end of the year, the staff determined several

Literacy Collaborative classrooms are rich in opportunities for children to hear stories read aloud, to write, and to connect print with their lives.

reasons why the Literacy Collaborative led to such excellent results.

First, the Literacy Collaborative provides a structure for the literacy block that allows new and veteran teachers to integrate literacy into all areas of the curriculum.

Second, there is at least a daily 90-minute block of uninterrupted time for reading instruction so classroom teachers are able to get into a rhythm of teaching either as a whole group or in small groups while the rest of the class is in literacy centers. Third, there is more effective use of support staff. We were able to utilize our Title 1 resource staff to go into the classrooms every day during the literacy block. This enables every child to participate in a small group guided reading lesson every day, which truly accelerates each student's learning.

Fourth, teachers learn how to "follow the lead of the child" in order to make more effective instructional decisions for the individual child or particular group of children that they are teaching. This is very different from making instructional decisions based on a prescribed scope and sequence.

Fifth, we implemented an intensive staff development program that includes formal coursework and classroom coaching of teachers as well as peer coaching. The literacy coordinator and teacher work together in order to improve student achievement. That is where the word, "collaborative," truly applies.

Sixth, teachers have shifted instruction from item knowledge teaching to teaching for strategies. Students learn strategies for problem solving both in reading and writing. As a result, they are empowered to become independent self-extending learners in reading and writing.

We could not have accomplished what we have without being part of the Literacy Collaborative. All of our teachers have embraced the Literacy Collaborative framework. They are what make the program work. We have seen the fruits of our labor—students who love to read and write. You can see the results in the hallways, classrooms, in interactions between staff and students and in the smiling faces of the students as they show pride in their ability to read and write.

The Fourth School

The fourth school, a suburban school in the Midwest, is part of a district-wide implementation of the Literacy Collaborative funded through both Title I and general district funds. The principal of one of the first schools in the district to implement the Literacy Collaborative writes about the changes she has noticed:

Two major reasons why the Literacy Collaborative has been so successful are having a staff willing to commit the time and energy to learn and implement the initiative and selecting a literacy coordinator who has excellent skills in teaching adults as well as children.

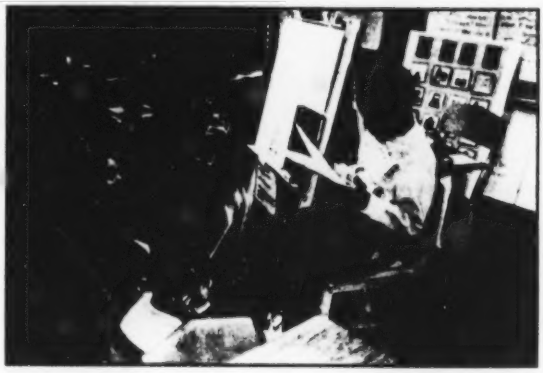
We worked hard to explain and reassure parents that even if they weren't seeing lots of worksheets and rote learning coming home, their children were still working and becoming very successful! Over time, they began to see for themselves how much their children could read and write at such early stages of their school career. Kindergarten parents were extremely impressed! We also reinforced a belief in what we are about with our support staff.

After two years of implementation at the primary level, we began to see a trend in our Ohio Fourth Grade Proficiency scores. For two successive years, they have been dramatically improved despite the fact that our school is the largest and most culturally and social-economically diverse in the school district. We attribute the improvement in those test scores to greater literacy acquisition at an early age and excellent teaching strategies used at the fourth grade level.

This is the 30th year in my career in education. In that time, I have seen many initiatives come and go with moderate success and change. The Literacy Collaborative has created the greatest single drive for improvement that I have ever witnessed. The concepts of literacy instruction combined with highly motivated, conscientious, bright teachers have made all the difference. And what a difference it has been!

The Fifth School

The fifth school is located in a middle-sized town in the upper Midwest. The literacy coordinator trained during 1997 – 1998. The district's Director of Elementary Education shared the following reflection regarding participation in the Literacy Collaborative:



Students write every day, then share and discuss their writing with each other.

In my 25 years as an educator, I have never seen an initiative have such a dramatic effect on instruction and student achievement as the Literacy Collaborative. The professional culture has gone from isolated to collaborative as they celebrate one another's successes, share expertise, and problem solve together. Assessment drives their instruction and provides immediate feedback to them about their teaching and decision-making. The usual teacher lounge talk has been replaced with reflective dialogue about their practice. Despite the many, many hours of effort that they have devoted to the initiative, they seem to be continually reenergized by the process because they see their students succeeding.

The enthusiasm of teachers has spread throughout the district and other schools now want "a piece of the action." It's a dream come true for a curriculum director. What better way for literacy reform to take place than to have teachers demand it!

Guided Reading involves children in small group instruction.

After two years of implementation at the primary level, we began to see a trend in our Ohio Fourth Grade Proficiency scores. For two successive years, they have been dramatically improved despite the fact that our school is the largest and most culturally and social-economically diverse in the school district.

Successful implementation of any change depends on providing a clear vision, skill development, incentives, adequate resources, and an action plan. The structure of the Literacy Collaborative not only takes these components into consideration but also ensures their orchestration for a successful implementation. I'm convinced that the real power of the Literacy Collaborative is in its strong research base of early literacy and its professional development model.

Finally, the principal offers his evaluation of having his school be a part of the Literacy Collaborative network:

Sharing in the implementation of this balanced literacy framework has united our school. Not only have we grown together through professional development, we have become united for one common cause, that being literacy-based instruction. Our children actively participate in managing their learning and we have shown significant gains in reading and writing achievement. We have also been an inspiration to our many visitors.

The educators whose voices have been shared here are part of the story of school change. They describe teachers and administrators who are working together with a common vision for their students' higher achievement.

Section IV: Summary and Recommendations

The Literacy Collaborative is a comprehensive approach designed to provide long-term support to schools working toward successful literacy achievement for every child. Schools involved in the project are, for the most part, urban schools with high levels of poverty and mobility. Trends in increased achievement on a standardized test of reading were noted for seven of twelve schools where teachers have implemented new instructional approaches, beginning with the initial training course three years ago. The schools with strong upward trends tended to exhibit most or all of the characteristics of effective implementation, including:

Interactive writing supports a wide range of writing skills.

- strong staff involvement and participation in the project, with all staff making the commitment to at least 5 years of development;
- a high level of implementation for instructional approaches such as guided reading, interactive writing, and word study;
- high involvement of the building administrator, including active participation in making decisions about the implementation plan and providing visible instructional leadership;
- regular training as well as adequate time for in-class coaching of teachers;
- ongoing training of teachers, as well as coaching in classrooms, after the initial course;
- over 2 hours of uninterrupted time for instruction for reading and language arts;
- effective and efficient use of instructional time; and,
- use of data (on a regular basis) to inform instruction and evaluate the outcomes of the instructional program.

Schools with mixed results tended to have weaker implementations across the school and within classrooms. These schools are working toward more intensive teaching as well as allocating more time for teaching.

The increases in performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test were greater for students in Literacy Collaborative schools who were at the same school for all three years. These increases may be attributable to more factors than attendance alone. These data indicate the possibility that the instructional program—its intensity and its consistency—has had a major impact on student performance. Students who have been at the same school from kindergarten through second grade are now receiving more consistent instruction from year to year.

Interview data from literacy coordinators, principals, and teachers at five schools revealed numerous changes as a result of the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative. Several of these changes include increased collegial support, change in the teacher talk, improved literacy teaching, and increased learning and enthusiasm among students for reading and writing. Overall, the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative has reformed literacy education in these schools.

Recommendations for Implementation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations for implementation are in order.

1. Schools that elect to join the Literacy Collaborative can expect positive results if factors related to implementation—including time, instruction, leadership, ongoing training, and use of data—are followed. Research has shown that the amount of time students spend engaged in reading affects student achievement (Burstein, 1980; Fisher, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, Dishaw, Moore, & Berliner, 1978; Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). Even though teachers are trained to help children become more strategic readers and writers, teachers need to assure that children are engaged in reading and writing instruction for significant amounts of time each day to achieve optimum results. Children will not become proficient readers and writers as quickly unless they have time to read and write and receive instruction in reading and writing every day.

Teachers are involved in ongoing professional development and collegial discussion.

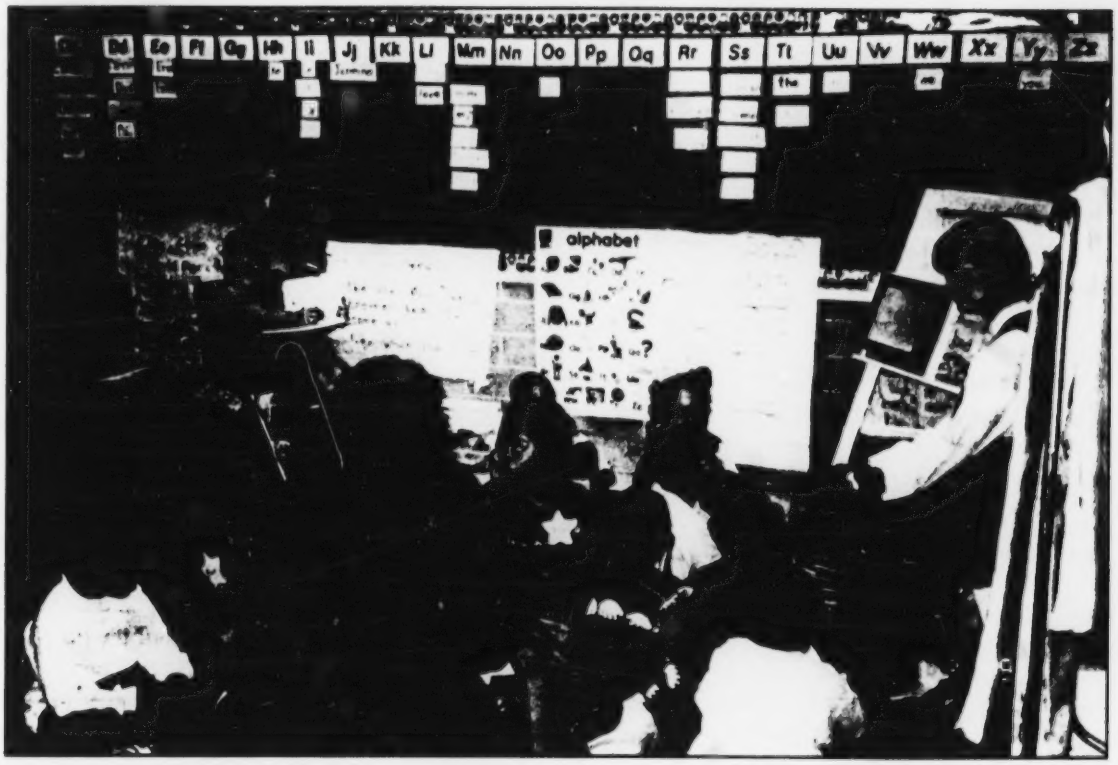
2. It is also essential for literacy coordinators to have adequate time to provide in-class coaching and assistance as a follow-up to the inservice course. We recommend ongoing professional development for literacy coordinators so that they can continue to refine their coaching skills. One year of training is inadequate to meet the challenges that occur as the whole school change effort gains momentum.
3. Efforts by schools to improve home-school communication should be continued so parents will realize the importance of children attending school daily. In addition, efforts to help reduce mobility rates, such as working with social service agencies or providing transportation so children can stay at the same school all year, should be explored to help individual children.
4. Based on comments from principals and literacy coordinators, it appears that literacy coordinators need administrative support in order to provide the desired change. In order for the Literacy Collaborative to be effective, a literacy coordinator's time should be dedicated to the responsibilities of that position and not be used for other functions in the school, i.e., be assistant principal or substitute teacher or pulled away for other administrative tasks. We would not expect children to make the same gains in reading and writing if the classroom teacher were absent most of the time; likewise, we cannot expect teachers to make changes in their teaching practices if the literacy coordinator who supports their learning is assigned to do other duties.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following research is needed:

1. We need more research examining teachers' processes for learning, the time it takes, and the support needed for deep levels of implementation. All educational improvements depend on teachers' skillful and thoughtful implementation of new approaches. Long-term training is needed, and the training must achieve depth in the classroom. Gay Su Pinnell and Carol Lyons are conducting an in-depth investigation of teacher development within the Literacy Collaborative as a partnership project with the University of Chicago. This two-year study of literacy coordinators is yielding important information on how to work effectively with teachers in coaching situations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching in guided reading and interactive writing.
2. We also need more research on the role of school-based teacher educators as literacy coordinators, and how they can perform their

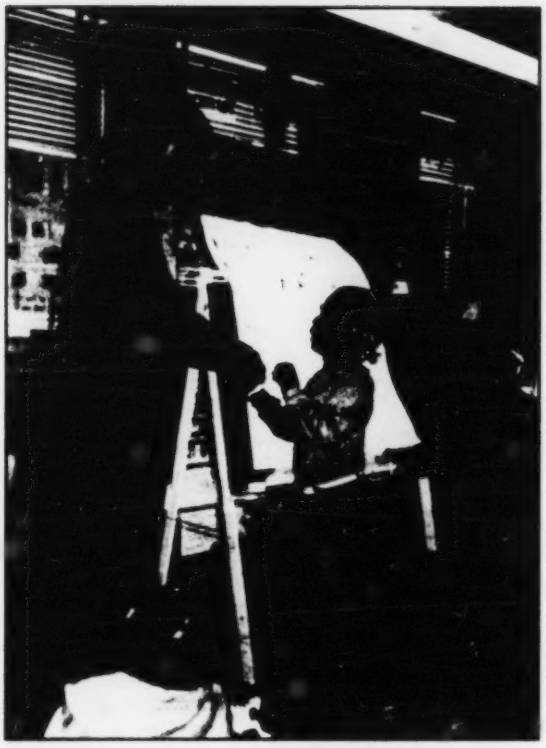
Teachers observe each other to analyze teaching and learning. Through in-class coaching, teachers receive feedback and assistance.



multi-faceted duties effectively. Even though literacy coordinators receive seven on-site weeks of preparation during a yearlong program of learning, many say that they need more training to perform their coaching and implementation roles as the project grows over time. The Lyons and Pinnell study also involves looking at the coaching role; however, more case studies of schools are needed. We recommend some in-depth studies of schools to determine aspects of the literacy coordinator's role that makes a difference. For example, the role of the principal is a critical one in implementing projects like the Literacy Collaborative; we need more information on the principal's role across time, from initiation to long-term development.

3. We need ongoing studies of the effects of Literacy Collaborative with cohorts of children both within districts and across broader areas. Donna Johnson, Tift County, Georgia, and Anthony Onwuegbuzie, Valdosta State University, in conjunction with Georgia State University, are designing such studies. The proposed research will examine word decoding and text-reading proficiency of matched pairs of students.
4. The instructional elements of the Literacy Collaborative, as well as the assessment system, require further development. Within the last three years, new publications have described and provided theoretical rationales for instructional approaches that were not available previously; in fact, these publications were, for the most part, not available for the training of literacy coordinators and teachers, the results of whose work are reported here. It is not clear whether these new publications will make a difference in the efficiency and effectiveness of the training program. The training programs have been continually refined and redesigned for greater depth. The results of these new developments should be assessed in future years. In addition, Jane Williams is completing validation studies of the benchmark testing materials with the goal of revision, as the data are available.

5. Another factor to study is the dissemination of Literacy Collaborative to many widespread sites. We recommend studies that work across sites to determine whether quality and consistency are being maintained. Like any high quality educational innovation, the work of the Literacy Collaborative is continually under development. The effects of each year's training program should be assessed to determine whether results continue to improve as well as whether project personnel develop new mechanisms for solving problems related to growth.



Teachers and children "share the pen" in interactive writing

During training sessions, literacy coordinators work in small groups to extend their learning through professional readings and discussion.

[1] *Reliability: Test-retest coefficients from 0.73 – 0.89 on a New Zealand population (Clay, 1985). For a U.S. population, Cronbach alphas procedure indicated reliability coefficient of .96 (Clay, 1993). Also, a U.S. population, corrected split-half coefficients ranging from 0.84 – 0.88 on a U.S. population of 403 subjects (Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, & Seltzer, 1994). Validity: correlation with Word reading for 100 children at age 6.0, correlation coefficients 0.79 (Clay, 1966). For a U.S. population, Cronbach alphas procedure indicated reliability coefficient of .96 (Clay, 1993).*

[2] *Stanines are standardized scores in which the range of reading achievement is divided into 9 equal units with a mean of 5 and a standard deviation of 2. Stanines of 1, 2, and 3 are below average; 4, 5, and 6 are average; and 7, 8, and 9 are above average.*

[3] *Measures of Text Reading Level were obtained by constructing a gradient of difficulty for text drawn originally from a basal reading system. A child's text reading level indicates the highest level of text that he/she reads at 90% accuracy or above.*

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Closing Statement

Analyzing the results of broad-based school reform efforts is a complex task. A school is a community within which many variables operate. Educators involved in the Literacy Collaborative are committed to long-term school development designed to improve literacy achievement. School staff members also make a commitment to look at student outcomes over time. Evaluation consists of teachers' and literacy coordinators' daily and weekly monitoring of children's progress. In addition, formal, systematically applied measures are used. Data from those measures are represented in this report and serve to evaluate the project as well as to provide as base for further development of training and implementation processes.

Training Sites

University

The Ohio State University
Georgia State University
Lesley College
University of Maine
Purdue University
St. Mary's College of California
Texas Tech University

Regional

Harris County, Texas

District

Morgan Hill, California
Oak Grove, California
Redwood City, California
Orange County, Florida
Tifton County, Georgia
Rockford, Illinois
University of Chicago, Illinois
Westbrook, Maine
Jackson County, Mississippi
Haddon Township, New Jersey
Pitt County, North Carolina
Hilliard, Ohio
Newark, Ohio
South-Western City, Ohio
Warren, Ohio
Wausau, Wisconsin